

JUDAH RESTORED:

A

P O E M.

V O L. I.



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JUDAH RESTORED:

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P O E M.

IN SIX BOOKS.

By Dr. ROBERTS,

Of ETON COLLEGE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N:

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M.DCC.LXXIV.



P R E F A C E.

THE subject of the following poem is, the return of the Jews from their Babylonish captivity. Tho the holy scriptures abound with *prophecies* relative to this event, yet are they very barren of *historical circumstances* with regard to the event itself. The lamentation of the Jews upon the loss of their country, their ardent desire to return, the wonderful and mysterious connection between that people, and the land of Canaan, are so pathetically described in the writings of the prophets, that I thought there could not be a more proper subject for a poem, than their return from this captivity.

It is said in the fifth chapter of Daniel where an account is given of Belshazzar's feast, '* in that night was Belshazzar, King of the Chaldeans, slain.' He was slain, as profane † history informs us, when the city of Babylon was taken by Cyrus. The poem opens with the evening preceding this great feast, and supposes it a feast in honour of their God Bel, or Baal; (for Daniel says ‡, 'they drank wine, and praised the Gods of gold and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone;') and closes with the return of the Jews, and the laying the foundation of the temple.

As some few circumstances occur in the course of this poem, which may be thought contradictory to Chronology, I shall mention them here, that I may at least obviate any suspicion, that I admitted them from an inattention to my subject; nor would I wish to pass

* Dan. v. 30.

† Xenophon Cyropæd. l. vii.

c. 5. §. 11.

‡ Dan. v. 4.

them over, as they appear to me so inconsiderable, as to form no material objection to a work of this nature; in which, tho' an author has no right to deviate from history, yet in subjects of very remote antiquity, and which consequently are involved in much obscurity, he may fairly model circumstances in such a manner, as to form them into a regular, and consistent plan; and where, by the silence of historians, so much is left for invention, may invent any thing which bears the appearance of probability.

Various have been the opinions of learned men with regard to the commencement, and conclusion, of the seventy years mentioned by Jeremiah, as the period of the Jewish captivity. It appears plainly to me, that it began * in the third year of Jehoiakim, king of Judah; as it certainly † ended in the first of Cyrus. But

* Dan. i. 1. 2.

† Ezra. i. 1.

then a question arises, 'Which year was the first of Cyrus?' I think we may certainly answer, 'The third year from the taking of Babylon.' For Darius the Mede succeeded Belshazzar, the last king of the Babylonish line, and reigned two years; during which time Daniel delivered his prophecy of * the seventy weeks. This Darius seems to have been the Cyaxares of profane history, King of Media, and uncle of Cyrus; by whose favour he enjoyed the kingdom of Babylon for the space of two years after it was taken. The first year of Cyrus therefore was probably the third year from the taking of Babylon; at which time Jeremiah's seventy years were completed. But it was necessary in this work to represent the decree of Cyrus for rebuilding the temple, as having been made soon after the taking of Babylon. For as I have laid the scene of it before that time, a chasm of two years would have been a great,

* Dan. ix. 24.

and

and real objection to it; whereas, in that uncertainty of chronology, I think there can be none to representing the decree of Cyrus as immediately subsequent to the taking of Babylon.

The history of that country is very intricate, and obscure. Some say, that Belshazzar was the same with Evil-Merodach, the son of Nebuchadnezzar. But that is inconsistent with the scripture account; for it is there positively said; that ‘all * nations shall serve Nebuchadnezzar, and his son, and his son’s son.’ Now Belshazzar was certainly the last of his line; and his son, and his son’s son, must mean two different persons; to which no one answers but Evil-Merodach, and Belshazzar; and therefore they certainly were not one, and the same person. I grant that Belshazzar is called the

* Jerem. xxvii. 7.—All nations, i. e. the nations before mentioned, v. 3, Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon; to which is afterwards added, Judah, v. 12.

* *son* of Nebuchadnezzar ; but it is common in scripture language to call all immediate descendants by the name of *sons*. In conformity to this mode of speech, I have represented Belshazzar as the son of Nebuchadnezzar.

It is to be observed, that tho the holy scriptures mention only two Kings of Babylon between Nebuchadnezzar, and Darius the Mede, yet profane history mentions two more, Neriglassar, and Laborosoarchod. These princes, if they ever had any existence, were certainly not of the family of Nebuchadnezzar †. I have taken the liberty of transferring to Belshazzar, whom † Herodotus calls Labynitus, what is mentioned by || Xenophon of the ill treatment, which Gobryas, and Gادات received from the King of Assyria.

In the third chapter of Daniel is recorded a singular history of Nebuchadnezzar ordering the Jews to bow down before an idol, which he

* Dan. v. 22.

† See Book ii.

‡ Herod. i.

|| Xenoph. Cyropæd. iv. 5.

erected on the plains of Dura, together with a miraculous interposition of Jehovah in vindication of his own honour. I have opened my work with a similar decree, which I suppose to have been made by Belshazzar. I have likewise introduced the angel Gabriel as communicating other circumstances to the prophet, besides those which are recorded. This I consider not as contradicting true history, but as founding probable events upon it; which, as I before observed, in a work of this kind can scarce be open to any objection.

In the fourth book of this poem, where Daniel relates to Cyrus the principal events of the Jewish history, in order to make the description more full, I have thrown together all the circumstances which are recorded concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and made Daniel represent himself as an eye-witness of them; tho' that was not literally the case. For the city of Jerusalem was sacked by the Babylonians three different times, before the ruin of it was completed,

pleted, by the burning of the temple; once in the reign of Jehoiakim, when Daniel was carried into captivity; a second time in the reign of his son Jehoiakin, who was also called Jeconiah, and Coniah; and a third time in the reign of Zedekiah, when the temple was burnt. But I thought I might fairly take this liberty, especially as these circumstances are so differently related. For instance; in the * second book of Kings it is said; ‘Jehoiachin was *eighteen* years old, when he began to reign, and he *reigned in Jerusalem three months.*’ Again, in the 12th verse of the same chapter it is said, ‘The King of Babylon took Jehoiachin, king of Judah, in the *eighth* year of his reign.’ Turn to the corresponding passage in the † Chronicles, and there you will read, ‘Jehoiakin was *eight* years old when he began to reign, and *he reigned three months, and ten days* in Jerusalem; and he did that which was evil in the

* 2 Kings xxiv. 8, &c. † 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9, &c.

‘ fight of the Lord. And when the year was
‘ expired, King Nebuchadnezzar sent, and
‘ brought him to Babylon, with the goodly
‘ vessels of the house of the Lord, and made
‘ Zedekiah his brother king over Judah, and
‘ Jerusalem.’ In the former account, Jehoiachin
was *eighteen* years old, when he began to reign;
in the latter he was only *eight*: In the former,
he reigned in Jerusalem *three months*, and yet
in the same account, the *eighth year* of his reign
is mentioned; in the latter, he reigned *three
months, and ten days*, and when the year was
expired, was carried to Babylon. According
to the former account, he must have been near
twenty-six years of age, when he was taken; ac-
cording to the latter, he was only *nine*; which
is not probable, because it is said*, ‘that he
‘ did evil in the sight of the Lord.’ The ac-
count in Esdras is somewhat different from the
two other accounts. Both father, and son, are

* 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9.

there called Joacim, as they are also by the Seventy. In this perplexity of circumstances, I thought myself justifiable, in throwing all the facts together, as if they had taken place at the same time.

The prophecy of Haggai with regard to the glory * of the latter house, which was not delivered till the second year of Darius the Persian, I have introduced some few years sooner; but it is here represented, as spoken to the very persons, to whom it actually was spoken, Zorobabel, and Jeshua.

I have made the Jews return, not directly thro the desert, which would have been the nearest way; but northward thro Mesopotamia, then across the Euphrates into Syria, and thence down to Palæstine. I know not, that there is any mention in scripture of the way of their return: But this was the more practicable, and the more poetical road; as it gave me an op-

* Haggai ii. 9—x. 2.

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portunity of introducing circumstances relative to the most ancient history of the Jews.

It is impossible not to observe how many prophecies were completed in the return of this people to Jerusalem. With regard to the time, it had been exactly ascertained long before its commencement; with regard to Cyrus, the instrument of it, he had been mentioned by name two centuries before his birth; with regard to the peculiar manner of the destruction of Babylon, that also had been circumstantially foretold. So that, when we put together the accounts of sacred, and profane history, and compare them with the several predictions of Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and other prophets, we must acknowledge, that they, who could foretell events, far beyond the reach of human comprehension, so long before they came to pass, spake not of themselves, but * *as the Spirit gave them utterance.*

* Acts ii. 4.

With

With respect to the measure, I fear that I have a public prejudice to encounter. It is become a fashion to think that poetry, and blank verse, are inconsistent, even tho we have in our hands that wonderful monument of human Genius, *Paradise lost*. But I know not how it is,

Cæcilius legitur salvo tibi, Roma, Marone.

Ode, Epigram, Elegy, Pastoral, Sonnet, and most of the smaller sorts of poetical composition, are best adapted to rhyme; but from Epic, Dramatic, Didactic, I would banish it entirely. In these cases, the harmony of numbers is to be effected by rhythm, not rhyme; which will be much richer, and fuller from a judicious variation of the pauses, than can ever be produced by a similitude of sound, and by making one line an echo to the other.

The use of *metre* has frequently been objected to in theatrical representations; but how much more forcible is this objection against the use of *rhyme*? the restraint is as unnatural in
Epic,

Epic, as in Dramatic poetry; for there also the characters must act, and speak. Several English tragedies have been written in rhyme; and it was the universal custom till of late years to close every act with three or four couplets, that the hero might strut off the stage to this harmonious jingle. Modern writers have judiciously exploded this practice: and tho the French poets still continue to write all their tragedies in rhyme, yet are they aware of the inconvenience of that practice. One of their best poets, thus expresses himself *. ‘ J’aurais souhaité pouvoir, à l’exemple des Italiens et des Anglais, employer l’heureuse facilité des vers blancs, et je me suis souvenu plus d’une fois de ce passage de Rucellai.

Tu fai purche l’imagin’ della voce,
Che risponde da i sassi, dove l’ Eccho alberga,
Sempre nemica fù del nostro regno,
E fù inventrice delle prime rime.

* Voltaire, Lettre à Mr. Maffei.

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‘ Mais

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‘ Mais je me suis aperçu, et j’ai dit, il y a
‘ longtems, qu’une telle tentative n’ aurait
‘ jamais de succès en France, et qu’il y aurait
‘ beaucoup plus de faiblesse que de force, a elu-
‘ der un joug qu’ ont porté les auteurs de tant
‘ d’ouvrages qui dureront autant que la nation
‘ Française. Notre poesie n’ a aucune des li-
‘ bertés de la votre, et c’est peut-etre une des
‘ raisons pour lesquelles les Italiens nous ont
‘ précédé de plus de trois siecles dans cet art si
‘ aimable, et si difficile.’

I know not whether the genius of the French language will admit of blank verse ; but Voltaire’s reason for not using it, merely because other authors have not done so, is but a weak one, especially as he acknowledges it to be a yoke, and that for want of this, and other liberties, the Italians have excelled the French in dramatic exhibitions. He might have added, that the English have excelled them also.

It is said that the difficulty of writing is much increased by the use of rhyme; perhaps so; but the merit of a work by no means arises from the difficulty of execution. In poetry, as well as philosophy, that is the best principle, which attains the same end by the application of the least force. There are men, whom nature has endow'd with such a quickness of parts, that they write with the greatest ease, and fluency; others again conceive more deliberately, and express more slowly. If there appears equal merit in the works of these authors, no reader extolls the one, because they were produced by much labour, or derogates from the other, because they flow'd with facility. Besides, I greatly doubt the truth of the position 'that it is an easier task to write blank verse than rhyme;' to some, I believe, it is; but with more, I believe the contrary to be true; and I am induced to think so for this reason,—that almost the lowest dealer in rhyme makes his ends chime

justly, and his lines flow tolerably harmonious; whereas few writers in blank verse have learnt the secret of relieving the ear by a proper variation of the cadence. The only difference between their measure, and rhyme is, that the rhyme is wanting; while the verse is constituted in such a manner, that the ear has a right to expect it, and is disappointed at not finding it. The stop stares you full in the face at the end of almost every line; the rhyme is not there; the pause is not varied: the reader throws by the poem with disgust; attributes the faults of the author to the nature of his work, and hastily concludes, that rhyme is essential to poetry.

I fear also that my work bears an inauspicious title. A subject founded on sacred scripture will probably less recommend itself, than if it had been built on some tale recorded by the respectable authors of fable or romance. The fourth book in particular is an epitome
of

of the Jewish history from the call of Abraham to the Babylonish captivity. This, however, I will venture to affirm, that it cost me more trouble to select, and connect the proper circumstances in this book, than any other part of the work. And in order to make it as useful as I could, I have subjoin'd the references, that the reader may have immediate recourse to the several passages in the Bible, if he has any desire to examine them.

I have not presumed to call this work an Epic poem; if I had, I should probably be told, that there is no hero sufficiently mark'd to dignify it with that title. Daniel would have answered that purpose, could I have trespass'd upon history so far as to have carried him back to Jerusalem. That however was impossible; nor was I solicitous about it. I believe there is unity of design; and it does not lessen my veneration for Milton, that some critics have affirmed Adam to be the hero of his poem,

poem, while others have confer'd that honour upon Satan. With regard to narrative, episode, simile, &c. I have endeavoured to follow the laws of Epic, as prescribed by the best models.

Such as the Poem is, I offer it to the public with all deference, and humility; not doubting but that every reader of candour, and taste, will pardon many imperfections in a work, which has been attended with no small labour, and difficulty.

JUDAH RESTORED.

B O O K I.

A R G U M E N T

O F T H E

F I R S T B O O K.

The subject proposed—state of the Jews towards the end of the captivity—Character of Belshazzar—A feast proclaimed in honour of Baal—Night comes on—Daniel's prayer—The angel Gabriel appears to Daniel—foretells the destruction of Babylon by Cyrus, and the deliverance of the Jews—directs Daniel how to behave, when sent for by Belshazzar to interpret a sign from heaven—The angel retires—Zorobabel comes to Daniel—his character—his conversation with Daniel—Zorobabel, Misael, and Ananiah, encourage the tribes—Morning rises—procession to the temple of Belus—the temple described—a sacrifice—the Chaldeans fall down before their idol—the Jews refuse to comply—Belshazzar's rage—the banquet described—the King's impiety—the hand-writing on the wall—Daniel sent for—his appearance—his interpretation—Belshazzar's resentment—Daniel prophesies the destruction of Babylon—the terror of the King—but the banquet continues

J U D A H

JUDAH RESTORED.

B O O K I.

THE fall of proud Belfhazzar, the return
Of Benjamin, and Judah, captive tribes,
I sing. Spirit of God, who to the eyes
Of holy seers in vision didst reveal
Events far distant; thou, who once didst touch
Their lips with heavenly fire, and tune their harps
To strains, sublimer than the Tuscan stream
Caught from his Latian bards, or ecchoed round

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The

The wide Ægean from Ionia's shore,
Inspire my soul ; blest spirit, aid my song.

10

The sun full seventy times had pass'd the realm
Of burning Scorpius, and was hastening down
The steep convex of heaven, since Babylon
Receiv'd her mourning prisoners. Savage taunts,
And the rude insult of their barbarous lords,
Embitter all their woe. Meanwhile the Law,
Proclaim'd on Horeb's top, neglected lies ;
Nor kid, nor evening lamb, nor heifer bleeds,
Nor incense smoaks, nor holy Levite claims
Choice fruits, and rich oblations. On the trees, 20
That o'er the waters bend, their untun'd harps,
Harps, which their fathers struck to festal hymns,
Hang useless. 'Twas the hill, 'twas Sion's hill,

V. 20. Psalm cxxxvii. 2.

Which

Which yet Jehovah lov'd. There once he dwelt;
 There stood his temple; there from side to side
 The † cherub stretch'd his wings, and from the * cloud
 Beam'd bright celestial radiance. Thence, tho driven
 In early childhood to a stranger's land
 Or born sad heirs of slavery, still they cast
 An anxious look from § Perath's willowy vale, 30
 Toward Jordan, sacred stream; and when the sun
 Sunk in the west, with eager eye pursued
 His parting beams; and pointed to the place,
 Where from their sight the faint horizon hid
 Those hills, which || round deserted Salem's walls
 Stood like a bulwark. And as some tired ‡ hart,
 Driven by keen hunters o'er the champain wild,

† 1 Kings vi. 29.

* 1 Kings viii. 10.

§ Euphrates.

|| Ps. cxxv. 2.

‡ Ps. xlii. 1.

Pants for the running brook, so long the tribes
 Of captive Judah for their native clime,
 Again to sing the strains of Jesse's son,
 Again to raise a temple to their God.

40

But oh ! what hope, what prospect of return,
 While fierce Belfhazzar reigns ? He undismay'd
 Tho' * hostile banners stream near Babel's towers,
 Round his gall'd prisoners binds the griping chain,
 And scoffs at Judah's God. Even now a shout
 Is heard thro every street, and with loud voice
 Arioeh, an herald tall, proclaims a feast
 To Bel, Chaldæan idol ; and commands
 That when the morrow dawns, soon as is heard
 The † sound of cornet, dulcimer, and harp,

50

* The army of Cyrus was encamp'd near Babylon.

† Dan. iii. 5.

Sackbut, and psaltery, each knee be bent
 Before the mighty dragon. Silent stand
 With eyes dejected Solyma's sad sons.
 Shall they comply? but will Jehovah then
 E'er lead them back to Canaan, pleasant land?
 Shall they refuse? but who, oh! who shall check
 Belshazzar's waken'd wrath? who shall endure
 The burning caldron, or what lingering death
 The tyrant's cruel vengeance may devise? 60
 Thus they irresolute wait the fatal hour.

Now Night invests the pole: wrapt is the world
 In awful silence; not a voice is heard,
 Nor din of arms, nor sound of distant foot,
 Thro the still gloom. Euphrates lulls his waves,
 Which sparkle to the moon's reflected beam;
 Nor does one sage from Babylon's high towers

Descry the planets, or the fix'd, and mark
 Their distance, or their number. Sunk to rest,
 With all her horrors of the morrow's doom, 70
 Lies Sion's captive daughter : sleep, soft sleep,
 His dusky mantle draws o'er every eye.
 But not on Daniel's unpillow'd head
 One opiate dew-drop falls. Much he revolves
 Dark sentences of old ; much pious zeal
 For great Jehovah's honour fires his soul ;
 And thus with lifted hands the prophet cries.

‘ Father of truth, and mercy, thou, whose arm
 ‘ Even from the day when Abraham heard thy voice,
 ‘ Stretch'd o'er thy chosen race, protects us still, 80
 ‘ Tho now awhile thou suffer us to groan
 ‘ Beneath a tyrant's yoke ; when, gracious Lord,
 ‘ O when shall we return ? O when again

‘ Shall

- ' Shall Siloa's banks, and Sion's holy top,
 ' Be vocal with thy name? Said not thy * seer,
 ' When seventy tedious moons had twelve times waned,
 ' We should again be free? Behold, the day
 ' Approaches. God of Israel, hath ought chang'd
 ' Thine everlasting counsel? wilt thou leave
 ' Thy people yet in sad captivity, 90
 ' And join thy prophet with the despis'd tribe
 ' Of Babel's false diviners? Not to thee,
 ' But to great Bel, Chaldæa's frantic priests
 ' Waft clouds of incense. Soon as morning dawns,
 ' With shouts the noisy revellers will proclaim
 ' The triumph of their God; nor will they cease
 ' To rouse their monarch's rage, should Judah dare
 ' Resist his impious edict. Then, O then,

* Jeremiah xxv. 11, 12, &c.

‘ God of our fathers, rise ; and in that day,
 ‘ Even before night, whose vaulted arch now shines 100
 ‘ With clustering stars, shall visit earth again,
 ‘ Confound their horrid rites, and shew some sign
 ‘ That yet again thy prisoners shall be free.’

He spake, and sudden heard a rushing noise,
 As when a North-west gale comes hovering round
 Some cape, the point of spacious continent
 Or in the Indian, or Pacific main ;
 The sailor hears it whistling in his shrouds,
 And bids it hail. Bright as the summer’s noon *
 Shone all the earth. Before the prophet stood 110
 Gabriel, seraphic form : graceful his port,
 Mild was his eye ; yet such as might command
 Reverence, and sacred awe, by purest love

* Revel. xviii. 1.

Soften'd, but not impair'd. In waving curls
 O'er his arch'd neck his golden tresses hung;
 And on his shoulders two broad wings were plac'd,
 Wings, which when clos'd, drew up in many a fold,
 But, when extended to their utmost length,
 Were twice ten cubits. Two of smaller size
 Came shadowing round his feet, with which he trod 120
 The elastic air, and walk'd o'er buoyant space,
 As on firm ground. A tunic brac'd his limbs,
 Blanch'd in the fields of light; and round his waist
 Was clasp'd an azure zone, with lucid stars
 All studded, like that circle broad, which cuts
 The Equator, burning line. The astonish'd seer
 With low obeysance bow'd his hoary head,
 While thus in voice benign the Cherub spake.

‘ Servant of God, that prayer was not unheard

‘ In

‘ In heaven. I caught it, as before the throne 130
 ‘ I stood, within the * emerald bow, and mix’d
 ‘ With fragrant † incense, offer’d it to him,
 ‘ The white-rob’d ‡ Ancient of eternal days,
 ‘ Even on his golden altar. Forthwith sent
 ‘ To thee, with speed impetuous, swifter far
 ‘ Than travels light’s meridian beam, thro realms
 ‘ Of space, studded with worlds, which neither thought
 ‘ Of mortal can conceive, nor numbers count,
 ‘ I come, God’s messenger. Not twice the morn-
 ‘ Shall dawn, ere all the woes which Salem felt 140
 ‘ Shall fall on Babylon. This, this is he,
 ‘ Whose streamers now round these devoted towers
 ‘ Wave to the western wind, whom God hath rais’d
 ‘ His instrument of vengeance. Twice hath pass’d

* Rev. iv. 3.

† Rev. viii. 3.

‡ Daniel vii. 9.

- ‘ A century, since him the * prophet filed
- ‘ Cyrus, the Lord’s anointed. He shall say,
- ‘ Cities of Judah rise ; He shall command,
- ‘ And Solyma’s unpeopled streets again
- ‘ Shall throng with busy multitudes. To him
- ‘ In vision, or in † dream, shall God reveal 150
- ‘ His secret purpose ; or what other way
- ‘ His power shall mould the victor’s ductile will
- ‘ To execute his promise. One day more
- ‘ Shall proud Chaldæa triumph. In that day
- ‘ Let not a knee in Benjamin be bow’d
- ‘ Save to Jehovah. What tho cruel pride
- ‘ Inflame Belfhazzar’s soul ; what tho his wrath
- ‘ Torments unknown prepare ; a sign from heaven
- ‘ Shall blast each vain device, a sign obscure,

* Isaiah xlv. 28.—xlv. 1.

† See book 3d, v. 470.

' But terrible. Ask not what ; for in that hour 160
 ' Shall beam celestial knowledge on thy soul,
 ' And thou shalt read the mystic characters
 ' Of dark futurity. Fear not his frown ;
 ' But in the sight of his assembled peers
 ' Hurl bold defiance at his throne ; and speak
 ' As fits a prophet of the living God.'

He spake, nor ended here ; but to the seer
 * Matters of import high disclos'd, which lay
 Deep in the womb of time. ' And these,' he cried,
 ' Record to distant ages, but conceal 170
 ' My present errand.' Daniel prepar'd
 Obedient answer ; but before he spake
 Gabriel had furl'd his wings, and now had reach'd
 The middle space 'twixt earth, and highest heaven.

* Daniel viii. 19. &c.

Meanwhile Zorobabel from restless sleep,
 If sleep it be, when the tired soul, weigh'd down
 By sad affliction, still in dreams renews
 The terrors of the day, awak'd, arose.
 Zorobabel, than whom among the sons
 Of Benjamin, and Judah, none was fir'd 180
 With zeal more fervent for Jehovah's name,
 Or wafted warmer sighs towards Sion's hill.
 He, much alarm'd, lest fear should bend the tribes
 To forc'd obedience, ran with hasty step
 To Daniel. Him in meditation lost,
 And deeply musing on the angel's words,
 He found, and paus'd awhile. The seer at length
 Observ'd his silence, with superior love
 Smiling; when thus Zorobabel began.

‘ O father of the prisoners, for in age, 190

‘ As

- ' As wisdom, thou surpassest, from that smile
- ' At other time encourag'd, I should draw
- ' Right happy presage. But what place for hope ?
- ' Saw'st thou not, when the herald's voice proclaim'd
- ' That every knee should bow, saw'st thou not mark'd
- ' In each sad face, distrust, and blank despair ?
- ' Cold is their love of Salem : soon, too soon,
- ' To anguish, and tormenting fires will yield
- ' Vows made in ease. Belfhazzar's darken'd brow
- ' With chilling horror smites the dastard herd, 200
- ' Nor did they with more humbled eye behold
- ' His † fire in all his glory. Tell, o tell,
- ' What best may fix their wavering faith, (for ne'er
- ' In danger, or distress, thy counsel fail'd,)
- ' Left haply they forget their fathers Gd,

† Nebuchadnezzar.

' And

‘ And mix their incense in these rites obscene,
 ‘ Abominations.’ Daniel replies.
 ‘ Fear not, Zorobabel ; for not an hour,
 ‘ No, not one hour beyond the appointed time
 ‘ Shall captive Judah mourn. This he, whose eye 210
 ‘ Surveys the future as the pass’d, declar’d,
 ‘ And what he speaks, is truth. Tis he, who nam’d
 ‘ The day of our deliverance, and that day
 ‘ Nor man, nor angel, hastens, or retards.
 ‘ I know that he, who wields Chaldæa’s sword,
 ‘ Regards not Sion’s king.’ “† Sleeps then your God,
 “ Ye despicable slaves,” the monarch cries,
 “ Or is he journeying in a foreign land,
 “ And wait ye his return ?” ‘ Yet will I rise,
 ‘ And in the sight of his assembled peers 220

† 1 Kings-xviii. 27.

‘ Hurl

‘ Hurl bold defiance at the monarch’s head,
 ‘ As fits a prophet of the living God.
 ‘ His vengeance recks not me. For wilt thou say
 ‘ That haughty Babylon, with all his power,
 ‘ Can match with Judah’s Lord? Hast thou not heard
 ‘ Of great Nebassar’s fate? and who is he,
 ‘ This proud Belfhazzar, that shall close the mouth
 ‘ Which God hath open’d? when the anointed Saul
 ‘ Obey’d not heaven’s command, did Samuel fear
 ‘ Even on that head, on which his hand had pour’d 230
 ‘ The imperial oil, to call fierce vengeance down,
 ‘ While his uplifted sword on Gilgal’s plain
 ‘ Hew’d * Agag to the ground? Could † Nathan’s voice
 ‘ By well-feign’d parable reprove the lust
 ‘ Of Jesse’s son, and from his streaming eyes

* 1 Samuel xv. 33.

† 2 Samuel xii. 1.

' Call tears of bitter sorrow ? read'st thou not
 ' In Israel's annals, when the monarch * stretch'd
 ' His arm to seize the prophet, how it shrunk,
 ' Contracted all the nerves ? And shall not I
 ' Defy this base Assyrian ? Haste ; collect 240
 ' Our scatter'd brethren ; fill their drooping souls
 ' With holy courage. With thee Mifael
 ' Shall go, and Ananiah, whom the proud
 ' Chaldæans † Shadrach call. O that my friend
 ' Good Azariah lived ! but he alas !
 ' Far from his native country sleeps in peace.
 ' In yonder cave beneath that arched rock ‡,
 ' These hands interr'd him ; much his pious zeal ;
 ' Much his authority might now prevail.
 ' But go ; the day-spring hastens. I the while, 250

* 1 Kings xiii. 4.

† Daniel. i. 7.

‡ See book 5th.

‘ Nor fear success, will pour a fervent prayer.

‘ The God of Judah will protect his sons.

He spake, nor did Zorobabel delay,

But, lowly bending, left the reverend seer,

And hasten’d where commanded. What remain’d

Of night, he summon’d Judah’s mourning tribes,

While Ananiah, and old Misael

Thus rous’d their souls. ‘ And have ye then forgot

‘ The calf in *Horeb, and the opprobrious vale

‘ Of †Hinnon, stain’d with blood? Have ye not heard, 260

‘ How great ‡Nebassar, as Belshazzar now,

‘ Proclaim’d that at the harp’s, and cornet’s sound,

‘ All knees should bow before that carved mass

‘ Metallic, which o’er Dura’s spacious plain

‘ Darted his evening shade? Defied we not

* Exod. xxxii. 19. † 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6. ‡ Daniel iii. 1.

' The burning caldron, by the angelic form
 ' Conducted thro the flames, that round us curl'd
 ' Their sloping points, and fan'd with freshest gales,
 ' Disarm'd of all their rage?' As when by strong

Attrition from the wire electric flame 270

At once with subtle force thro all around
 Shoots its invifible influence; fo the words
 Of Mifael thro every Jewish heart

Darted the facred fire. No more they fear
 The monarch's angry threats; no more they talk
 Of tame fubmiffion to his power, but fwear
 Eternal fealty to Judah's God.

Now morn with rofy-colour'd finger rais'd
 The fable pall, which provident night had thrown
 O'er mortals, and their works, when every ftreet, 280
 Strait, or tranfverfe, that towards Euphrates turns

Its sloping path, resounds with festive shouts,
 And teems with busy multitudes, which press
 With zeal impetuous to the towering fane
 Of Bel, Chaldean Jove; surpassing far
 That Doric temple, which the Elean Chiefs
 Rais'd to their thunderer from the spoils of war,
 Or that Ionic, where the Ephesian bow'd
 To Dian, queen of heaven. Eight towers arise,
 Each above each, immeasurable height, 200
 A monument at once of eastern pride,
 And slavish superstition. Round, a scale
 Of circling steps entwines the conic pile;
 And at the bottom on vast hinges grate
 Four brazen gates, towards the four winds of heaven
 Plac'd in the solid square. Hither at once
 Come flocking all the sons of Babylon,

Chaldean,

Chaldæan, or Assyrian; but retire
 With humblest awe, while thro their marshall'd ranks
 Stalks proud Belshazzar. From his shoulders flows 300
 A robe, twice steep'd in rich Sidonian hues,
 Whose skirts, embroider'd with mæandring gold,
 Sweep o'er the marble pavement. Round his neck
 A broad * chain glitters, set with richest gems,
 Ruby, and amethyst. The priests come next
 With † knives, and lancets arm'd; two thousand sheep,
 And twice two thousand lambs stand bleating round,
 Their hungry God's repast: six ‡ loaded wains
 With wine, and frankincense, and finest flour,
 Move slowly. Then advance a gallant band, 310
 Provincial rulers, counsellors, and chiefs,
 Judges, and princes: from their essenc'd hair

* Daniel v. 29. † 1 Kings xviii. 28. ‡ Bel and the Dragon, v. 3.

Steam rich perfumes, exhal'd from flower, or herb,
 Assyrian spices: last, the common train
 Of humbler citizens. A linen vest
 Enfolds their limbs; o'er which a robe of wool
 Is clasp'd, while yet a third hangs white as snow,
 Even to their sandal'd feet: a signet each,
 Each bears a polish'd staff, on whose smooth top
 In bold relief some well-carv'd emblem stands, 320
 Bird, fruit, or flower. Determin'd, tho' dismay'd,
 Judæa's mourning prisoners close the rear.

And now the unfolded gates on every side
 Admit the splendid train, and to their eyes
 A scene of rich magnificence display,
 Censers, and cups, and vases, nicely wrought
 In gold, with pearls and glittering gems inlaid,
 The furniture of Baal. An altar stands

Of vast dimensions near the central stone,
 On which the God's high-priest strews frankincense, 330
 In weight a thousand talents. There he drags
 The struggling elders of the flock ; while near,
 Stretch'd on a smaller plate of unmix'd gold
 Bleed the reluctant lambs. The ascending smoak,
 Impregnate with perfumes, fills all the air.

These rites perform'd, his votaries all advance
 Where stands their idol ; to compare with whom
 That earth-born crew, which scal'd the walls of heaven,
 Or that vast champion of Philistia's host,
 Whom in the vale of * Elah David slew 340
 Unarm'd, were minish'd to a span. In height
 Twice twenty feet he rises from the ground ;
 And every massy limb, and every joint,

* 1 Sam. xvii. 50.

Is carv'd in due proportion. Not one mine,
 Tho branching out in many a vein of gold,
 Suffic'd for this huge column. Him the priests
 Had * swept, and burnish'd, and perfum'd with oils,
 Essential odours. Now the sign is given,
 And forthwith strains of mixed melody
 Proclaim their molten thunderer, cornet, flute, 350
 Harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, unite
 In loud triumphal hymn, and all at once
 The King, the nations, and the † languages
 Fall prostrate on the ground. But not a head,
 But not one head in all thy faithful bands,
 O Judah, bows. As when the full-orb'd moon,
 What time the reaper chaunts his harvest song,
 Rises behind some horizontal hill

* Baruch vi. 24.

† Daniel iii. 7.

Flaming with reddest fire ; still, as she moves,
 The tints all soften, and a yellower light 360
 Gleams thro the ridges of a purple cloud :
 At length, when midnight holds her silent reign,
 Chang'd to a silver white, she holds her lamp
 O'er the belated traveller ; so thy face,
 Belsazzar, from the crimson glow of rage,
 Shifting thro all the various hues between,
 Settles into a wan, and bloodless pale.
 Thine eye-balls glare with fire. 'Now by great Bel,'
 Incens'd exclaims the monarch, 'soon as morn
 ' Again shall dawn, my vengeance shall be pour'd 370
 ' On every head of their detested race.'
 He spake, and left the fane with hasty step
 Indignant. Him a thousand * lords attend,

* Dan. v. 1.

The minions of his court. And now they reach
 The stately palace. In a spacious hall,
 From whose high roof seven sparkling lustres hang,
 Round the perpetual board high sophas rang'd
 Receive the gallant chiefs. The floor is spread
 With carpets, work'd in Babylonia's looms,
 Exquisite art; rich vessels carv'd in gold, 380
 In silver, and in ivory, beam with gems.
 'Midst these is plac'd whate'er of massy plate,
 Or holy ornament, * Nebassar brought
 From Sion's ranfack'd temple; lamps, and cups,
 And bowls, now sparkling with the richest growth
 Of Eastern vineyards. On the table smoaks
 All that can rouse the languid appetite,
 Barbaric luxury. Soft minstrels round

* 2 Kings xxv. 15.

Chaunt songs of triumph to symphonious harps,
 Propt on a golden couch Belfhazzar lies, 390
 While on each side fair slaves of Syrian race
 By turns solicit with some amorous tale
 The monarch's melting heart. '* Fill me,' he cries,
 ' That largest bowl, with which the Jewish slaves
 ' Once deck'd the altar of their vanquish'd God.
 ' Never again shall this capacious gold
 ' Receive their victim's blood : Henceforth the kings
 ' Of Babylon, oft as this feast returns,
 ' Shall crown it with rich wine, nectareous draught.
 ' Fill high the foaming goblet ; rise, my friends ; 400
 ' And as I quaff the cup, with loud acclaim
 ' Thrice hail to Bel.' They rose ; when all at once
 Such sound was heard, as when the roaring winds

* Dan. vi. 2. 3.

Burst from their cave, and with impetuous rage
 Sweep o'er the Caspian, or the Chronian deep.
 O'er the devoted walls the gate of heaven
 Thunder'd, an hideous peal; and lo! a cloud
 Came darkening all the banquet, whence appear'd
 * A hand, (if hand it were, or airy form,
 Compound of light, and shade,) on the adverse wall 410
 Tracing strange characters. Belfhazzar saw,
 And trembled: from his lips the goblet fell:
 He look'd again; perhaps it was a dream;
 Thrice, four times did he look; and every time
 Still plainer did the mystic lines appear,
 Indelible. Forthwith he summons all
 The wise Chaldeans, who by night consult
 The starry signs, and in each planet read

* Dan. v. 5—28.

The dark decrees of fate. Silent they stand ;
 Vain are their boasted charms. With eager step 420
 Merodach's royal widow hastes to cheer

Her trembling son. ' O king, for ever live ;
 ' Why droops thy soul ; ' she cries ? ' what tho this herd
 ' Of sage magicians own their vanquish'd art,
 ' Know'st thou not Daniel ? In his heart resides
 ' The spirit of holy Gods ; 'twas he who told
 ' Thy father strange events, and terrible ;
 ' Nor did Nebassar honour one like him
 ' Thro all his spacious kingdom. He shall soon
 ' Dispell thy doubts, and all thy fears allay.' 430
 She spake, and with obeyfance low retir'd.

' Then be it so ; haste, Arioch, lead him here,'
 Belshazzar cries ; ' if he interpret right,
 ' Even tho my soul in just abhorrence holds

' His

‘ His hated race, I will revoke their doom,
 ‘ And shower rich honours on their prophet’s head.’

Nor long he waited, when with graceful step,
 And awe-commanding eye, solemn and slow,
 As conscious of superior dignity,
 Daniel advanc’d. Time o’er his hoary hair 440
 Had shed his whitest snows. Behind him stream’d
 A mantle, ensign of prophetic powers,
 Like that, with which inspir’d * Elisha smote
 The parting waters, what time on the bank
 Of Jordan from the clouds a fiery car
 Descended, and by flaming coursers drawn
 Bore the sage Tishbite to celestial climes,
 Maugre the gates of death. A wand he bore,
 That wand, by whose mysterious properties

* 2 Kings ii. 8—15.

The shepherd of Horeb call'd the reffluent * waves 450

O'er Pharoah, and his hoft, with which he ftruck

The barren flint, when from the riven † cliff

Gush'd freams, and water'd all the thirfty tribes

Of murmuring Ifrael. Thro many an age

Within the temple's unapproached veil,

Fast by the rod, which bloom'd o'er Aaron's name,

Still did the holy relic reft fecure.

At length, when Babylonia's arms prevail'd,

‡ Seraiah fav'd it from the flaming fhrine,

With all the facred wardrobe of the prieft, 460

And bore it fafe to Riblah. Dying there

The prieft bequeath'd the facred legacy

To Daniel. He, when fummmon'd to explain

As now, God's dark decrees, in his right hand

* Exod. xiv. 17.

† Exod. xvii. 6.

‡ The high prieft.

Brandish'd

Brandish'd the mystic emblem. 'Art thou he,
 ' Art thou that Daniel, whom Nebassar brought
 ' From Salem, whom the vanquish'd tribes adore,
 ' In wisdom excellent? Look there, look there;
 ' Read but those lines,' the affrighted monarch cries,
 ' * And cloath'd in scarlet wear this golden chain, 470
 ' The third great ruler of my spacious realm.'

He spake, and thus the reverend seer replied.

' Thy promises, and threats, presumptuous king,
 ' My soul alike despises; yet, so wills
 ' That spirit, who darts his radiance on my mind,
 ' (Hear thou, and tremble,) will I speak the words
 ' Which he shall dictate. "Number'd is thy realm †,
 " And finish'd: in the balance art thou weigh'd,

* Dan. v. 7.

† MENE MENE TEKEL VPHARSIN. Dan. v. 25.

' Where

“ Where God hath found thee wanting : to the Medes,

“ And Persians thy divided realm is given.” 480

‘ Thus faith the Lord ; and thus those words import

‘ Graven by his high behest. See’st thou this wand ?

‘ Ne’er has it born, since first it left the trunk,

‘ Or bud, or blossom : all its shielding rind

‘ The sharp steel strip’d, and to dry winds expos’d

‘ The vegetative sap ; even so thy race

‘ Shall perish : from thy barren stock shall rise

‘ Nor prince, nor ruler ; and that glittering crown,

‘ Won by thy valiant fathers, whose long line

‘ In thee, degenerate monarch, soon must end, 490

‘ Shall dart its lustre round a stranger’s brow.’

‘ Prophet of evils ! dar’st thou pour on me

‘ Thy threats ill-ominous, and judgments dark,’

Incens’d the monarch cries, ‘Hence to thy tribes ;

VOL. I.

D

‘ Teach

' Teach them obedience to their sovereign's will,
 ' Or I will break that wand, and rend in twain
 ' The mantle of thy God.—Or if these marks
 ' Thou wilt erase from that accursed wall,
 ' Take half my realm.' He spake, and fix'd his eyes

Wild staring on the mystic characters :

500

His rage all sunk at once ; his fear return'd

Tenfold ; when thus the man of God began.

' Go to the shady vales of Palæstine,
 ' Vain prince, or Syrian Lebanon, and tear
 ' The palms, and cedars from their native mould
 ' Uprooted ; then return, and break this rod.
 ' Believe me, far more arduous were the task :
 ' For it has harden'd in the streams of heaven ;
 ' And tho not dedicate to forcerer's arts
 ' By magic incantation, and strange spells ;

510

' Yet

' Yet such a potent virtue doth reside
 ' In every part, that not the united force
 ' Of all thy kingdom can one line, one grain,
 ' Of measure, or of solid weight impair.
 ' Wilt thou that I revoke thy destin'd fate?
 ' Devoted prince, I cannot. * Hell beneath
 ' Is moved to meet thee. See the mighty dead,
 ' The kings, that sat on golden thrones approach,
 ' The chief ones of the earth. "O Lucifer,
 " Son of the morning, thou that vaunting said'st 520
 " I will ascend the heavens; I will exalt
 " My throne above the stars of God, the clouds

* Isaiah xiv. 9, &c.

This very sublime chapter has exercised many Poets. The Bishop of Oxford has translated it into a fine Latin Alcaic Ode (see Lowth's Prælectiones) and Mr. Mason has converted it into an English ode.

“ Shall roll beneath my feet,’ art thou too weak
 “ As we? art thou become like unto us?
 “ Where now is all thy pomp? where the sweet sound
 “ Of viol, and of harp?’ with curious eye
 ‘ Tracing thy mangled corse, the rescued sons
 ‘ Of Solyma shall say, ‘is this the man
 “ That shook the pillars of the trembling earth,
 “ That made the world a desert?’ all the kings, 530
 ‘ Each in his house intomb’d, in glory rest,
 ‘ While unlamented lie thy naked limbs,
 ‘ The sport of dogs, and vultures. In that day
 ‘ Shall these imperial towers, this haughty queen,
 ‘ That in the midst of waters sits secure,
 ‘ Fall prostrate on the ground. Ill-ominous birds
 ‘ Shall o’er the unwholesome marshes scream for food;
 ‘ And hissing serpents by sulphureous pools
 ‘ Conceal

' Conceal their filthy brood. The traveller
 ' In vain shall ask where stood Assyria's pride : 540
 ' No trace shall guide his dubious steps ; nor sage,
 ' Vers'd in historic lore, shall mark the site
 ' Of desolated Babylon.' Thus spake
 The feer, and with majestic step retir'd.

Aghast the nobles stand ; cold drops of sweat,
 Cold as the icy dews of death, o'erspread
 Belshazzar's face ; and ever and anon
 His eyes hold converse with the fatal wall
 In wild distraction. Nathless he prolongs
 The feast, and quaffs the still returning bowl, 550
 Which, like the fabled stream of Lethe, steep
 His senses in oblivion. Dance and song,
 With all the dissonance of barbarous mirth
 Confound his callous mind ; his dread subsides ;

Stretch'd on his golden couch the monarch lies
Secure, nor heeds the prophet's warning voice.

END OF THE FIRST BOOK.

JUDAH

JUDAH RESTORED.

B O O K II.

A R G U M E N T

O F T H E

S E C O N D B O O K.

Description of the walls of Babylon, which were now surrounded by Cyrus.—Character of Cyrus—His army described—He calls a council—his speech—Gadatas and Gobryas return from their nocturnal expedition—Gobryas gives an account of the present disorder'd state of Babylon, which determines Cyrus to attack it immediately—A Persian sacrifice—The army marches—They turn the waters of the river into their dyke—Gobryas and Gadatas conduct them up the channel, which is now dried, into the city—Confusion and slaughter of the inhabitants—Belshazzar's terror—his cowardice, and death.

B O O K

B O O K II.

WHILE thus Belfhazzar, and his impious peers,
 Forgetful or regardless of the sign,
 Which still seems fainter, as their fears are lull'd
 By wine, that powerful opiate of the soul,
 Protract their clamorous banquet, thro the streets
 Of Babylon the sons of riot hold
 Nocturnal orgies, and with savage zeal
 Impatient wait the morn, that shall destroy
 The remnant of the tribes. Ah cruel king!
 Ah tyrant ! never shall that morning rise
 On thy devoted head. Thy citizens,
 Rude waiffaillers, think not what an host is near;
 And not a sentinel leans on his pike,

Listening

Listening to catch the sound of hostile feet
 Beneath the towering walls; those walls, within
 Whose large inclosure the rude hind, or guides
 His plough, or binds his sheaves, while shepherds guard
 Their flocks, secure of ill : on the broad top
 Six chariots rattle in extended front.
 For there, since Cyrus on the neighbouring plain 20
 Has mark'd his camp, the inclos'd Assyrian drives
 His foaming steeds, and from the giddy height
 Looks down with scorn on all the tents below.
 Each side in length, in height, in solid bulk,
 Reflects its opposite; a perfect square;
 Scarce sixty thousand paces can mete out
 The vast circumference. An hundred gates
 Of polish'd brass lead to that central point,
 Where thro the midst, bridg'd o'er with wondrous art,

Euphrates

Euphrates leads a navigable stream, 30

Branch'd from the current of his roaring flood.

Yet, for the persevering hand of toil

Each obstacle surmounts, yet a deep trench

And wide, fit channel for a mighty bed

Of waters, had the host of Cyrus drawn

Round all this spacious magnitude. The moon

Full twice twelve times had fill'd her horns with light,

Since to Chaldæa's frontiers from the hills

Of Persia Cyrus came. There long inur'd

To toil, and manly exercise, he learnt 40

Even in his early youth, to bend the bow,

To hurl the pointed javelin, and to brace

His sinews in the wintry flood. His board

Was strew'd with herbs, or cressies from the brook,

The feast of temperance. Hence, bold in war,

He

He spread the terror of his arms o'er all
 The nations round. On lesser Asia's plains
 He fought, till from the Ægean to the banks
 Of Perath, every warrior bow'd the knee
 To Persia's mighty monarch. Thro the vales 50
 Of Syria, thro Arabia's spicy groves,
 His ensigns stream'd. But tho his valour great,
 Yet greater was his mercy. Justice, truth,
 And sacred chastity preserv'd his soul
 From every foul offence, that blasts the name
 Of desolating conquerors. With him
 Came many a gallant chief, and many a tribe.
 Say, Muse, their names and numbers : in thy book
 The fair memorials of heroic fame
 Stand registered ; and thence the poet's hand 60
 Transcribes whate'er of great or virtuous,

Heroes of old atchiev'd in better days,
Or patriots suffer'd for their country's love.

First the bleak barren rocks of Persia send
Their valiant sons of war, a thousand cars
Arm'd with sharp scythes, and twice ten thousand spears.
They from Carmania to the western bound
Of Sufiana, from the Persic gulph
Stretch to Great Media's frontiers. From the banks
Of Pafatigris, and that unbridg'd stream 70
Araxes, they come flocking: o'er their backs
Rattles a quiver flow'd with barbed reeds.
These from a twanging yew, whose horned points
Are forc'd to contact by the elastic string,
They shoot with aim unerring; in the left
A platted target, in the right they bear
A javelin, short, but massy; from the belt

Two

Two daggers hang ; and every horse is arm'd
 With hides, which scarce the sharpest blade can pierce.

Next from Gedrosia's sands, unhappy soil, 80

From Parfis and from Arbis, Ctesias leads

A band of gallant archers. Here, so fame

Reports, a nation of stout Amazons

Once held imperial sway, tho now no trace

Remain, save here and there an ancient name

Recording female prowess. With these march

The rough Carmanians. They with skins of fish

Protect their hairy limbs, and haunt thick woods,

Or the deep cavern of some arched rock,

Their wretched habitations. Ne'er did they 90

Hear the delightful sound of ponderous wain

Creeking with autumn's spoils, nor the tir'd ox

Unharness'd, lowing for his evening food.

With

With these are join'd the slingsmen bold and tall
 Of Arachofia. Eastward to the Ind
 Spreads Arachofia, and fair cities boasts
 With bastions, and high towers adorn'd. A thong
 Of pliant leather in their hands they bear,
 And round their waist is tied a scrip, where lie
 Huge balls of molten lead. Nor be forgot 100
 The various tribes of Bactria, Comjans,
 And Zariasfans, and Chomatrians, once
 A mighty kingdom : by Tigranes these
 In rank and file are rang'd ; and on their shields
 Some quaint device is graven, emblem of war,
 Or mark of royal ancestry. By these
 Stand Margiana's warriors, from the banks
 Of northern Oxus : in his hand a lance
 Each poises, cut from some stout vine, whose trunk

Not two Titanians of gigantic form 110
 Can clasp with arms extended, and which spread
 Thick clusters o'er the sloping hills, in length
 Two cubits. From Hyrcania's forests wild,
 Tho interspers'd with many a verdant scene
 Of corn, and luscious figs, impetuous rush
 Ten thousand bowmen; down their shoulders hangs
 A tiger's shaggy skin, spoils of the chase,
 And naked their unsandal'd feet: the son
 Of old Orontes leads the savage horde,
 Fierce Ariamnes. With them Parthia sends 120
 Her daring horsemen: they, of Scythian race,
 Exil'd in ancient days, had settled near
 Hyrcania's woods, a hardy clan, and o'er
 High tottering precipice, or foaming flood,
 Drove their unbridled coursers. Oft pursued

In

In battle did they turn, and from their bow
 Speed arrows wing'd with death. In after times
 The restless Roman, when he dar'd invade
 The eastern world, felt this, and on his throne
 The proud usurper trembled at the name 130
 Of distant Parthia. By these Porus leads
 His Indian squadrons. Down the rugged heights
 Of Taurus, from the Caspian's southern bank,
 Eight thousand Medians pour: barren the soil,
 The mountains labour with their load of snow
 Nine wintry months: there Salmanassar plac'd
 Samaria's captive tribes, and bade them till
 A rude unthrifty desert. They, what time
 Wife Solomon was number'd with the dead,
 Deserted his degenerate heir, and rais'd 140
 The banner of rebellion. 'To your tents*,

* 1 Kings xii. 16.

' O Israel,' cried *Nebat's son, when lo!
 In Bethel, and in Dan, two golden calves,
 Ægyptian idols, from their God seduc'd
 The ten apostate tribes, who fix'd their seat
 In Ephraim's mount; till proud Samaria's walls
 Were built, where Judah saw the rival throne
 Of alienated Israel. But who
 Can count the forces, which Ecbatanè
 Pour'd thro her lofty gates? They with gay crests 150
 Of gaudy plumage waving to the wind
 Crown their resplendent helmets, and their hair
 Tinge with Sidonian colours. To their feet
 Hangs a loose robe of purple, whose broad hem,
 Scollop'd by female art, sweeps all the ground,
 Save when engag'd in battle round their waist
 They twist it, as a zone. Great was the host,

*Jeroboam.

And mighty : chariots, girt with sharpen'd scythes,
 Two thousand ; twice three hundred thousand foot,
 And cavalry proportion'd. In the midst 160
 Stands their great leader, Cyrus. On his casque
 A crimson crest, spangled with stars of gold,
 Streams, like a meteor. O'er his breast is clasp'd
 With polish'd studs a cuirass ; and his legs
 Are fenc'd with greaves of brass. A sevenfold shield
 His left sustains, his right a javelin wields,
 And at his side a falchion beams with gems,
 Jasper, and emerald. Near him is his car,
 At whose four poles eight fiery courfers neigh,
 Champing their golden bits. He stands, and views 170
 With secret exultation all his host :
 Yet often does he cast a pitying eye
 On * Lydia's captive monarch, oft-repress

* Cræsus was at this time a prisoner in the camp of Cyrus.

Each rising thought of pride, and sigh to see
The fall of regal state, the sport of war.

Now shines the moon on the pavilion'd plain,
Where brazen helmets, and high-burnish'd shields,
Seem to the distant traveller, like some stream,
Whose waters gently swoln by western breeze,
Wave to the sparkling rays. Tho not an eye 180
Is clos'd thro all their troops, such silence reigns
As in the dreary mansions of the dead
Strikes a more awful horror, than the shouts
Of dissonance, and confusion. Cyrus calls
To council all his peers. Tigranes first,
Porus, and Ctesias, and the giant strength
Of Ariamnes; and what heroes else
Of fealty, and prowess unprov'd,
Were summon'd by their chief. He from his seat

In graceful attitude uprose, and thus 190
 With words of manly confidence began.

‘ Princes and warriors, whom the love of fame,
 ‘ Or sense of injuries yet unreveng’d
 ‘ Far from your native homes hath hither brought
 ‘ Combin’d in strictest league ; tho two long years
 ‘ Round these proud ramparts we have toil’d in vain ;
 ‘ Tho safe within those walls impregnable
 ‘ The Assyrian with insulting jests derides
 ‘ Our preparations ; never will we quit
 ‘ This enterprise, till humbled Babylon 200
 ‘ Receive her conquerors thro her hundred gates,
 ‘ And those high bastions bow. Shall we return
 ‘ Inglorious ? shall our name become the scoff
 ‘ Of all the neutral nations ? when we drove
 ‘ The royal hunter, and his light-arm’d bands.

' From Media, where the semblance of a chace,
 ' And oaths of peaceful amity, conceal'd
 ' His hostile purpose, turn'd he from his flight
 ' Till Babylonia's frontiers sav'd from death
 ' Her routed prince? Remember ye the day,
 ' When by a herald's voice I summon'd him
 ' To prove his prowess, and in single fight
 ' Decide the fate of millions? skulk'd he not,
 ' Like a base coward, in those fenced walls,
 ' And slew my faithful messenger? Revenge,
 ' And honour, dearer to a soldier's soul
 ' Than life, than liberty, forbids delay.
 ' Nor grieve, my friends, for twice the ripen'd corn
 ' Has nodded o'er the furrows, since we rais'd
 ' Our banner on this spacious plain; the hour
 ' Now hastens, when the meed of victory

' Shall

' Shall crown our patient labours. That broad dyke,
 ' Which round the city with incessant toil
 ' Our pioneers have sunk, is now compleat,
 ' Capacious of the stream, which wont to waft
 ' Thro many an arch, the tributary spoil
 ' Of bleeding provinces. The obsequious flood
 ' Will change his wonted course, and in the midst
 ' Of Babylon will leave his channel dry.
 ' There will we pour our troops, which pant for war, 230
 ' And, tho obedient to their leader's voice,
 ' Scarce brook this tedious rest. Fear not success;
 ' To combat is to conquer. * Mithras smiles
 ' Favouring our bold emprise. Scarce dawn'd the day
 ' When to the right six towering eagles soar'd,
 ' And spread their broad wings o'er the Persian tents.

* The sun, worship'd by the Persians under that name.

' I hail'd the mystic omen. Ere the sun
 ' Had sunk behind the Red sea's western coast,
 ' I sent two gallant spies, to whom is known
 ' Each winding path, each bush, each babbling stream, 240
 ' Gobryas, and Gadatas, if haply ought
 ' May favour, or retard, our destin'd march.
 ' Faithful I know them, and in arms approv'd ;
 ' Much do I wonder at their long delay.'

Scarce had he said, when at the camp arrive
 The expected chiefs. ' Welcome, my gallant friends,
 ' Thrice welcome to our tent,' the monarch cries ;
 ' Bold was your enterprise; and if I read
 ' Your looks aright, ye bring no trivial news
 ' Founded on idle rumour, or surmise ; 250
 ' But such well-built report, as shall direct
 ' Our future operations ; whether still

‘ To wait some luckier hour ; or, ere we sleep,

‘ Let loose the rage of vengeance, and of war.’

He ended, and thus Gobryas. ‘ Think not, prince,

‘ Tho now six hours have pass’d, since first we left

‘ These tents, (for then the sun was hastening down,

‘ And now ’tis midnight’s tide,) ah ! think not us

‘ Regardless of our trust : nor deem, tho born

‘ Assyrians, that we e’er can waste a wish 260

‘ For what Belshazzar governs. Wrongs like ours

‘ Might kindle all the sparks of fierce revenge

‘ Even in the tamest soul. With hasty step,

‘ We paced the plain, and from the walls soon heard

‘ The voice of riot, as ten thousand throats

‘ Were howling all at once their barbarous sounds

‘ Discordant. Here awhile we stood and paus’d,

‘ For louder, and still louder was the noise,

‘ As

' As nearer we advanc'd. Before the walls
 ' No sentinel was seen, no light appear'd 270
 ' Suspended in the lofty towers. At length
 ' To that frequented sepulchre we came,
 ' Where the tall cypress with his ancient boughs
 ' O'erhangs the tomb of Ninus. There we found
 ' Two wretched exiles leaning o'er the stone.
 ' Wet were their robes, and from their hair they drain'd
 ' The dripping stream. First they prepar'd for flight,
 ' But stop'd at once; and, falling at our knees,
 " Whoe'er ye be, they cried, ye cannot add
 " One misery to our store: our woes are full. 280
 " Are ye from yonder tents? conduct us there
 " And we will fight against our tyrant's head
 " Till we be drench'd in blood." "I know you now,
 " Replied my brave companion, "for your speech

290132H 4

" Declares

- “ Declares that ye are strangers, and, I guess,
 “ Sons of Judæa’s captive tribes. But say,
 “ How did ye pass these walls? at this late hour
 “ Why bend ye o’er that consecrated stone?
 “ Tis not from reverence; for ye serve a God
 “ Who lives beyond those hills; whose name, till late,
 “ Was never heard on Babylonia’s coast.
 “ What mean those shouts? if ye will answer true,
 “ By the great spirit, which dwells within that tomb,
 “ Life, liberty is yours.” Confirm’d by this,
 “ And fearless they reply. “ We are indeed
 “ The wretched children of captivity.
 “ We flee Belshazzar’s fury: feasts, and wine,
 “ Have steep’d his senses in forgetfulness;
 “ And open stand the brazen portals, where
 “ The high-arch’d bridge controuls the foaming flood;
 “ Headlong

" Headlong from thence we plung'd, and down the stream
 " Swam with the unwearied vigour of despair,
 " Beyond those towering walls. The city soon
 " Even to the meanest host would yield her stores."
 ' They spake, when Gadatas with haste replied,
 " This is no time for words, come, follow me,
 " Nor fear your tyrant's wrath." Even now before
 ' Yon tent they stand, while round the foldiers throng,
 ' A curious multitude, eager to mark
 ' Their dress, their accent, and with hungry ears 310
 ' Devour their tale. Now is the time, my chief;
 ' Now is the wish'd-for hour of vengeance come.
 ' O may I live to plunge my trusty sword
 ' Deep in that monster's heart, who slew my child,
 ' And drove my grey heirs to a foreign camp,
 ' For shelter, for revenge!' Now Cyrus rose,

And

And with him rose his faithful counsellors.

To each he gives his charge as each excels

In dignity, in valour, or in fame.

But first he bids the Magian priests prepare 320

A sacrifice : they with the living fire,

Once kindled by the lightening's breath, and since

Thro many an age preserv'd with holy awe,

Approach the pile. There on the flames is stretch'd

A perfect victim ; while the chiefs with myrrh,

And aromatic spice, and precious oil

Feed the devouring element. But far,

Far off the soldiers stand : for he, who throws

The least pollution on the sacred hearth,

Be it thro chance, or inattention, dies. 330

As oft the west-wind o'er the Atlantic main

From Carolina's, or Virginia's coast,

Thy

Thy world, Columbus, travelling, on a field
 Of ripen'd corn, now spent, and languid, breathes;
 Each loaded ear salutes the rising dawn:
 So when the Magian mutters mystic words,
 The troops at once bend forward to the ground,
 And hail the host of heaven, the clustering stars
 Fix'd or erratic, and the horned moon:
 All, but the mighty Mithras: he retir'd, 340
 That cover'd by the silence of the night
 His faithful votaries might direct their march,
 And in the morning, crown'd with conquest, meet
 His rising beams. And now the army moves
 In separate squadrons; to the right wing these,
 These wheeling to the left, as disciplin'd
 By frequent practice. The long rank extends,
 The close file deepens. Cyrus leads the van,

While

While stout Deïoces, before him rears
 The imperial ensign, on whose burnish'd top
 The golden eagle spreads his painted wings ;
 That eagle, which as earliest fame reports,
 Oft marshal'd to the field the warlike kings
 Of ancient Persia. Hush'd is every sound,
 Still is the night, and not a whisper breathes
 Thro all the legions of their populous host.

And now they cross the skirt of that broad shade
 Which Babylon's high walls, that intercept
 The moon's bright beams, cast o'er the plain beneath,
 And march unheard, unseen. First their wide dyke
 Receives the averted stream ; The Persians walk
 Thro the dried channel. Gobryas leads the van,
 And Gادات. To them, for well they knew
 The pass, great Cyrus had consign'd this post

Of

Of danger, and of fame. The bank they mount
 With eager haste; the brazen steps ascend;
 Wide open stand the portals; and at once
 The unguarded streets of Babylon are fill'd
 With hostile multitudes. In vain to arms
 Rush the rude rioters, and call on Bel 370
 To save his faithful votaries. He nor hears,
 Nor checks the victor's rage. In heaps they lie
 Prostrate, some dead, some dying: hideous shrieks
 Rend the keen air. Meanwhile the Assyrians rous'd,
 But rous'd too late, unite in bands, as fear,
 Or chance directs; and thro the crouded streets
 On friend, on foe, with undirected aim,
 Hurl staves, or pointed darts, or feather'd shafts,
 Undisciplined. Some from the lofty towers
 Tear conic pinacles, or roll huge stones 380

Rent from the walls, which down with hideous crash
 Fall ponderous. Some to Bel's illumin'd fane
 Thronging precipitate in vain implore
 The senseless idol : these Tigranes finds
 All prostrate ; and attended by a troop
 Of faithful Zariafpan, hews at once
 The god, and all his votaries to the ground.
 Some seek the bridge, if chance a friendly boat
 Shall waft them down the stream ; but oh ! what grief,
 What horror chills their souls, when they behold 390
 That flood, where oft they wont to brace their limbs,
 Convey'd they know not whither, and a way
 Thro the dried channel worn by many a foot.
 Aghast they stand, men, women, old and young,
 Promiscuous ; when Hyrcania's chief appears,
 Fierce Ariamnes : from the twanging yew

Five hundred arrows fly : deep groans of pain,
 And hideous ejulations to the scene
 Add horror tenfold : on the bank they roll
 Writhing in agonies, or happier close 400
 Their eyes for ever in eternal sleep.
 These seek their homes, if chance the much-lov'd walls
 May screen them from the conquerors ; those unbar
 The brazen gates, and strive to leave behind
 Babel's deserted towers ; in vain ; the dyke
 Opposes, and the sword of Porus drives
 Back to their walls the trembling fugitives.
 Yet some awhile maintain unequal fight
 Unarm'd, and thro the river strive to force
 A passage to the plain : plung'd in the waves 410
 They perish ; or, if chance escap'd, fresh troops
 Of Persians watch the adverse banks, and slay

Whate'er

Whate'er the waters spar'd. Within the walls
 Of Babylon was rais'd a lofty mound
 Where flowers, and aromatic shrubs adorn'd
 The pensile garden. For Nebassar's queen,
 Fatigu'd with Babylonia's level plains,
 Sigh'd for her Median home, where nature's hand
 Had scoop'd the vale, and cloath'd the mountain's side
 With many a verdant wood; nor long she pin'd 420
 Till that uxorious monarch call'd on art
 To rival nature's sweet variety.
 Forthwith two hundred thousand slaves uprear'd
 This hill, egregious work; rich fruits o'erhang
 The sloping walks, and odorous shrubs entwine
 Their undulating branches. Thither flocks
 A multitude unseen, and mid the groves
 And secret arbours all night long conceal'd,
 Silent, and sad, escape the victor's sword.

Now the glad sound of loud triumphal notes 433
 Mix'd with the yells of terrou, and dismay,
 Are wafted thro the concave arch of night
 To that imperial mansion, where the king
 Lies revelling with his minions. Nitocris
 First heard, and started. In that spacious room,
 On whose rich sides was painted many a chase,
 With all the warlike acts of Ninus old,
 And great Semiramis, she sat, and wove
 Her variegated web. Her slaves around
 With sprightly converse cheer'd the midnight hour; 440
 When sudden, chill'd with horrou, in their arms
 She sinks, a breathless corse. And now the noise
 Invades Belshazzar's ear. A messenger *,
 And still another messenger arrives,
 To tell him, all is lost. On the adverse wall

* Jeremiah li. 31.

Instant his eye is fix'd : the characters,
 Which yet remain, grow blacker, and increase
 In magnitude tenfold : ' Where, where,' exclaims
 The affrighted prince, ' O where is Daniel ? where
 ' Is that interpreter of heaven's decrees, 450
 ' Whose curse prophetic on mine ear still sounds
 ' More horrible, than these alarming peals,
 ' Which, as I speak, nearer and nearer roll,
 ' The harbingers of slaughter. Haste, arise ;
 ' Tell him I spare the tribes ; tell him I bow
 ' To his Jchovah.' Thus Belshazzar spake,
 When sudden with impetuous uproar
 Thro the wide portals rush'd an armed band,
 Persians, and Medes. Gobryas, and Gadatas,
 Breathing fierce vengeance, and inveterate hate, 460
 Conduct the bloody troop. Where, monarch, where

Is now thy cruel wrath, thy pride, thy power?
 Sunk on his knees behold Belfhazzar bows
 Before his rebel exiles ! ' Spare, O spare
 ' My life,' the coward tyrant trembling cries ;
 ' Let Cyrus wear my crown. To barren sands,
 ' To regions, never trod by human foot,
 ' Banish me, where I ne'er again may know
 ' Sweet social intercourse, but think, O think,
 ' How fearful 'tis to die.' Thus while he spake 470
 With sword uplifted o'er their bending king
 The victors stood. And now perhaps his prayers,
 And eyes, which upward rolling, long'd for life
 Tho miserable, had stop'd the fatal blow,
 Had not his murther'd son forbad the rage
 Of Gobryas to subside. On his arch'd neck
 The ponderous falchion falls, and at one stroke

Smites from its spouting trunk the sever'd head

Of Babylonia's monarch. Ever thus

Perish fell cruelty, and lawless power !

480

Meanwhile the Persian Cyrus by his guards,

A valiant band, encompass'd, thro the streets

Had march'd, and check'd his soldiers' frantic rage.

Pent in their camp two tedious years, restrain'd

From war, their souls delight, and now let loose

At once on whom they hate, scarce can they quench

Their thirst of blood. And as a herd of wolves

Or in Lucanian, or Appulian woods,

Inflam'd by ravenous hunger prowl for prey ;

If chance they hear the sound of distant sheep

490

Within some watled fence, o'er the weak wall

Bound at one spring, and fate their greedy maw

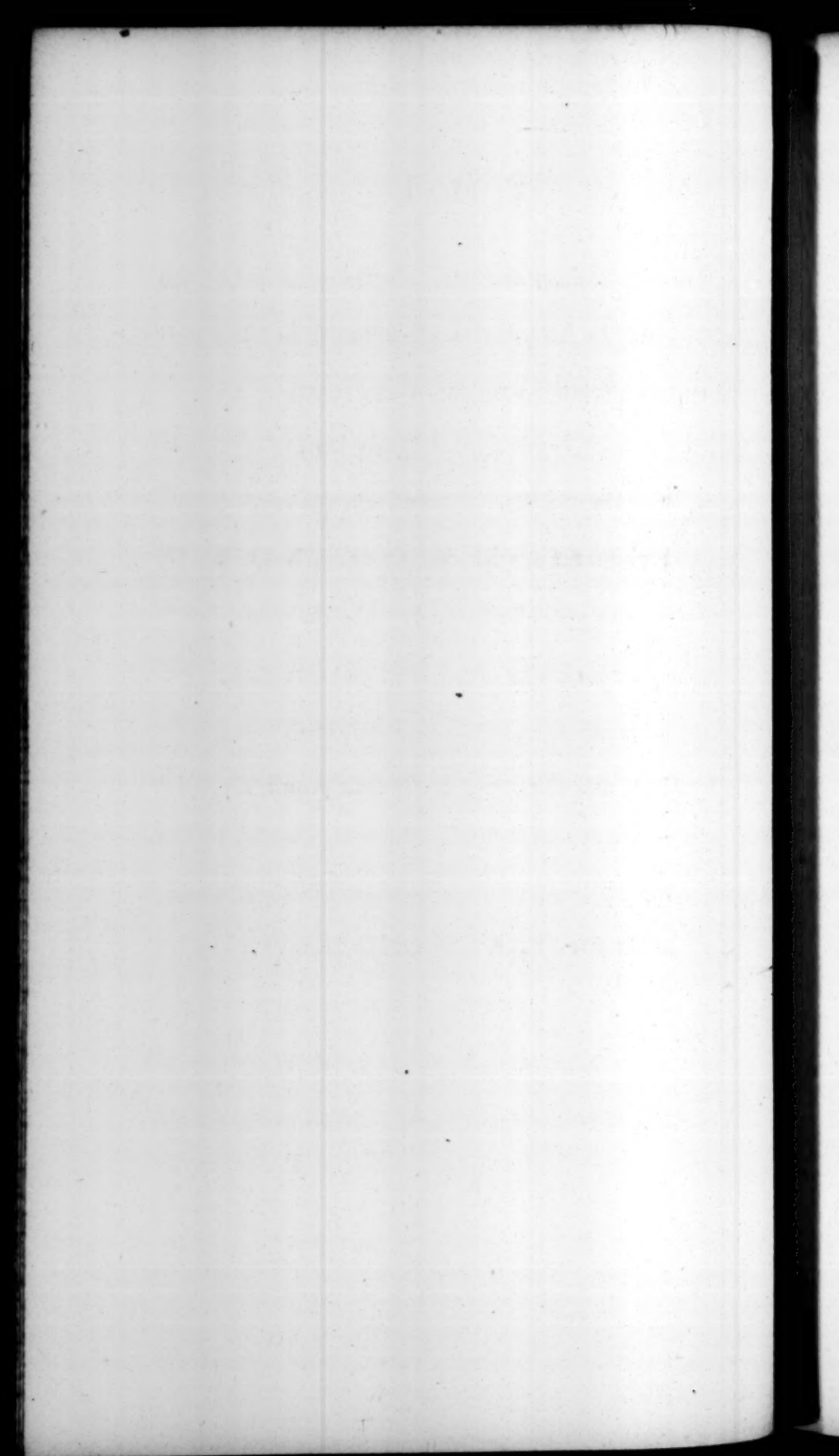
With all the slaughter'd flock ; so the fierce bands

Of Cyrus, long withheld, pour all their ire
 Infatiate on their unresisting foes.
 Yet do they not, tho' steep'd in blood, neglect
 Their sovran's awful voice, who bids them sheath
 The sword, and tells them that the valiant fight
 For victory, not for slaughter. He, when now
 Weltering in gore he saw Nebassar's heir, 500
 And all the imperial ensigns on the ground,
 Look'd down, and paus'd awhile; then gently rais'd
 A tear of soft compassion from his eye,
 And turning to the nobles, 'tho your king
 ' Hath paid the debt of war, fear not,' he cries,
 ' The sword of death is sheath'd.' Nor more he spake,
 Nor left the peers occasion to reply,
 But drawn by strong instinctive sympathy
 Turn'd to the scene again, where whilom lay

The monarch's mangled corse. A stream of blood 510
 Mark'd where he fell ; but now his lifeless trunk
 The insulting soldiers drag thro every street,
 And on a pole high-rais'd his dripping head
 Bear to the distant walls. There from the top,
 O'er the broad trench, with many a taunt they cast
 What once was great Belfhazzar. On the plain,
 His realm, where oft he march'd in princely state,
 The royal carcase lies ; while ravenous birds
 Flock round, and screaming claim their promis'd prey.

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

J U D A H



JUDAH RESTORED.

B O O K III.

A R G U M E N T

O F T H E

T H I R D B O O K.

Confusion in the city—check'd by Cyrus—Burial of the Babylonians—Council of the Jews—Characters, and names of the counsellors—Daniel opens the business of their meeting—Jeshua speaks—Othniel—Zorobabel—Misaël—Daniel ends the debate, and they determine to apply to Cyrus, for leave to return to Jerusalem—Interview between Othniel, and his Babylonian mistress—He endeavours to sow sedition among the Jews—Cyrus receives the homage of the Babylonians—Daniel requests that the Jews may be permitted to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem—Cyrus desires to hear their history.

B O O K

B O O K III.

A L L night with hideous uproar, and dismay,
Screams, shrieks, and yells of death, (far other
notes

Than those, which usher'd in the evening star,)
The echoing walls resound. For now the hour
In vision to prophetic eye reveal'd,
The fatal hour of Babylon is come,
And every barbed shaft, and every dart,
Flies heaven-directed. Thee, so wills thy God,
Ah! fall'n Jerusalem, thee, and thy tribes,
The valiant warriors of the * north shall fate
With glorious vengeance : prostrate in the dust

13

* Jerem. l. 9.

Lie

Lie half thy foes ; the rest shall bow their necks
 Beneath a foreign yoke. Now morn appears,
 Scattering her hoar frost o'er Chaldæa's plain,
 And by degrees unfolds a horrid scene,
 The carnage of the night. The Median, struck
 With pity and remorse, down drops his sword ;
 And even Hyrcania's savage clans, long train'd
 To deeds of blood, recoil. Beneath a pile
 Of slain, some mangled chief, with eye half clos'd, 20
 And long-protracted groan, still lingering, begs
 A short, tho painful respite. Cyrus now
 Bids raise the imperial ensign : at that sight
 Chomatrians, Bactrians, and the valiant troops
 Of Parthia, with what other powers encamp'd
 By Babylon, come flocking, and surround
 Their gallant chief. He with one silent look

Of admiration all their toil o'er pays :

Nor with the valiant for a nobler meed.

' Well have ye fought, my friends,' the hero cries, 30

' But now the bloody rites of war are clos'd,

' Remember ye are men. Unburied lie

' The slain of Babylon. Hear ye those cries ?

' They are the shrieks of widows, whom this night

' Has rob'd of all they love. Their sons, their lords,

' Disfigur'd, and with many a ghastly wound

' Transfix'd, from day's broad eye they fain would hide,

' And rescue from opprobious insult rude.

' Haste to their aid ; by gentle acts relieve

' Those miseries, which ye caus'd : against the dead 40

' Ye war not ; them to the earth consign, and drop

' The tear of human pity o'er their graves :'

He spake, nor did his Persians not obey.

Three days, three nights, the frequent corse was seen,

With limbs all mangled, and with entrails torn,
 Stretch'd on an iron bier ; these in the earth
 With decent awe they laid, and at their side
 Plac'd wine, and funeral cates ; left the cold shade,
 Still hovering round her native clay, should pine
 For those gross elements she lov'd before.

50

Meantime the Jews, whom wisdom, rank, or age,
 Exalts above their peers, in full debate
 Assemble. Daniel first, the voice of heaven,
 Directs their counsels. By him, Misael sits,
 And Ananiah ; Jeshua next, the son
 Of Jozadeck ; to him in right descent
 From Aaron, and from Phineës, devolv'd
 The hereditary priesthood ; but the law
 Of regal, or of sacerdotal power
 No trace retain'd, by long captivity
 Suspended. By him stands Zorobabel,

60

Who

Who deems each hour an age, till Sion rears
 Her lofty summit to his eye, and shews
 Her stones, once worn by many a pious knee
 Of Levite, and of people. Othniel
 With sidelong glance reproves his violent zeal;
 Othniel, descended from that race, who wont
 In happier days to raise the festal hymn
 Of triumph, and record in sacred song
 The victories of their fathers. He enslav'd 70
 By amorous ditties had resign'd his heart,
 Won by a fair idolatress, and wish'd,
 Forgetful of his faith, to rest his head
 For ever on the base Assyrian's lap
 Degenerate. Bilshan too, and Mispar comes,
 And Nehemiah. In mute silence all
 Stand fix'd awhile, when Daniel thus begins.

' Look round ; behold the vengeance of your God :
 ' The tyrant is no more : dried are the streams
 ' On which the queen of waters sat secure ; 80
 ' And Babylon, detested, dreaded name,
 ' Proud Babylon is fall'n. The day is come,
 ' When rescued Judah in the promis'd land
 ' Shall rest his wearied foot. And yet who knows
 ' But, reconcil'd by habit, ye may choose
 ' The yoke of bondage ; or, too indolent
 ' To tempt the perils of a tedious way,
 ' Forget Jerusalem ? Say, shall we bend
 ' Before the victor's throne, and from his voice
 ' Implore the imperial edict of return, 90
 ' Or thro successive ages linger on
 ' Apostate, till no trace, no mark be left
 ' Of God's peculiar people ? Speak, my friends :

' Tis

'Tis freedom's privilege that each should speak
 'What each thinks just, and right.' He paus'd; and next
 Rose Jeshua, green in years, in counsel sage;
 'Show me,' said he, 'thro all the faithful tribes
 'A soul so dastard, and as thus I tear
 'This scroll in twain, even so from Abraham's stock
 'My hand shall sever him. But it may not be; 100
 'Few days have pass'd, since in that ruin'd fane
 'Of Belus, we defied *Belshazzar's rage,
 'And scorn'd his giant god: and shall we now
 'Stand doubting, whether we will yet be slaves,
 'When freedom calls us? O Jerusalem,
 'Pride of our fathers, object thrice ador'd
 'Of Judah's tenderest love, ne'er did I see
 'Thy walls, thy sacred hill, thy towering shrine:

* See B. i. v. 355.

‘ But often did my father to mine eye,
 ‘ To fancy’s eye, display the glorious scene 110
 ‘ Magnificent: oft did the good old man
 ‘ Draw back the holy veil, which he alone
 ‘ Might pass, and shew’d me the mysterious rites,
 ‘ The imperial oil, the garments rich with gems,
 ‘ The cups sacrificial, and altars stain’d
 ‘ With many a victim. “ These, said he, my child,
 “ If thou shalt live till Judah be restor’d,
 “ It will be thine with reverence to preserve
 “ From hands unhallow’d: twill be thine, if e’er
 “ Ungrateful Benjamin forget his God, 120
 “ With fervent prayer, and evening sacrifice
 “ To stop the pointed thunderbolt. But first,
 “ O first erect a temple on that hill
 “ Which great Jehovah loves. Twas there he dwelt,
 “ Twas

" 'Twas there he spake in * visions to his faints,
 " There heard the vow propitious, and receiv'd
 " The fragrant incense." Thus my father spake;
 ' Deep in my mind are all his counsels laid;
 ' And I shall count each moment for an age,
 ' While Babylon detains me. What advice 130
 ' Cold hearts, and timid caution may propose
 ' I reckon not: were the danger twice tenfold,
 ' 'Tis impious even to doubt, when heaven invites.'
 He ended, when uprose the form uncouth
 Of Othniel. With a mark indelible,
 Like the first murderer's, God had stamp'd his face,
 That all might know him. Yet with flattering words
 Oft did he lure the tender virgin's heart
 To sportive dalliance: nor unvers'd to hide

* Psalm lxxxix, 19.

Seditious stratagems with specious boast
 Of public love, he drew the gazing croud
 To hail him as their universal friend,
 The champion of their rights. For Sion's hill,
 Or Sion's God he car'd not. By his crew
 Of midnight revellers encompass'd round,
 Oft would he mock Jehovah's dreaded name,
 And with opprobrious Alleluiah's mix
 His songs impure. He rose, and thus began.

‘ Well hast thou spoken, Jeshua; well thy words
 ‘ Become thy sacred station; nor, I trust, 150
 ‘ Are others less impatient to be free.
 ‘ For me, tho linen girdle ne’er shall bind
 ‘ My waist, nor golden mitre grace mine head,
 ‘ For me be witness all the host of heaven
 ‘ How oft at midnight’s latest hour mine eyes

‘ Have

' Have burst the bonds of sleep, how oft my voice
 ' Has cried to heaven, that Judah may return.
 ' Nor should Chaldæa's wealth, nor all the gems
 ' Which the sun ripens in his eastern beds,
 ' Nor should the weight of gold, which Solomon 160
 ' Coffer'd in * Lebanon's umbrageous house,
 ' Spoils of rich merchants and Arabian kings,
 ' Induce me for a moment to protract
 ' These hours of bondage. But let zeal be check'd
 ' By wisdom; never yet did safety spring
 ' From rash impetuous counsels. Shall we then
 ' Surround the victor, on his new-earn'd throne
 ' Scarce seated, and with inauspicious suit
 ' Disturb his opening reign? rather by flow
 ' Degrees, and soft insinuation, win 170

* 1 Kings x. 14—17.

' His favour, if so he may send us home
 ' Safe convoy'd by a bold and numerous host
 ' Of slingersmen, and of archers. Long the way,
 ' And perilous, which from Chaldæa leads
 ' To Salem's ruin'd walls. Remember what
 ' Our fathers suffer'd, when in haste they fled
 ' From Ramefes, and forty tedious years
 ' Travers'd the pathless desert. Did a man,
 ' Say did one man in all that * number'd host,
 ' Save Joshua †, and Caleb, press the grapes, 180
 ' Or drink the milk of Canaan? Famine ‡, thirst §,
 ' And fiery serpents § hissing in their tents,
 ' And ** pestilence destroy'd their diminish'd tribes,
 ' Besides what enemies by force, or wile,

* Numb. i. 2.

† Numb. xxvi. 65.

‡ Exod. xvi. 3.

§ Exod. xvii. 3.

§ Numb. xxii. 6.

** Numb. xvi. 49.

' In center, or in rear, attack'd their troops
 ' Fatigued with toil, and vigils; Basan's * king,
 ' And Sihon †, whom from Arnon's watry banks
 ' To Hermon, which Sidonians ‡ Syriion call,
 ' The Ammorite obey'd; and that dread name
 ' Huge || Amalek; and what other powers their march 190
 ' Infested, from the day when first they pitch'd
 ' In § Succoth, to that hour when from the hills
 ' Of Abarim **, they saw the extended plain
 ' Of Moab, and the walls of Jericho,
 ' By Jordan, pleasant stream. Ills great as theirs,
 ' Or greater may assail us. Sweet the name
 ' Of Sion, and to every Jewish ear
 ' There is a magic in the sound, which charms

* Numb. xxi. 33.

† Ibid. xxiii.

‡ Deut. iii. 9.

§ Exod. xvii. 8.

§ Numb. xxxiii. 5.

** Deut. xxxii. 49.

' More

- ‘ More than a thousand Babylonian spells.
 ‘ But shall we ever reach this happy land, 200
 ‘ Unaided, and encumber’d on our march
 ‘ With all our stores? Our wives, our helpless babes,
 ‘ Can they protect us from the lawless rage
 ‘ Of all the assassins, who perchance infest
 ‘ The way, and like a torrent from the hills
 ‘ In savage clans come pouring o’er the plain?
 ‘ Can they secure us from the parching drought
 ‘ Of unslak’d thirst, or ’mid the famine stop
 ‘ Our cries for bread? Then shall we curse in vain
 ‘ Our hasty counsels, and with anxious eye, 210
 ‘ Such as our fathers cast towards Palæstine,
 ‘ Look back for lost Euphrates. Let us go,
 ‘ When freedom calls, nor wisdom disapproves.’

He ended, and Zorobabel began.

‘ * Who speaks not what he thinks, even as the gates
 ‘ Of hell my soul detests him. Foul designs
 ‘ Varnish’d with specious words, are doubly foul.
 ‘ Dar’st thou rehearse the miseries of our fires
 ‘ Laden † with Egypt’s spoils, and yet forget
 ‘ The hand that led them thro the wilderness, 220
 ‘ Far from the house of bondage? “Yoke my cars,
 ‘ “Prepare my chivalry,” the Memphian cried;
 ‘ In vain; the waves, that like two ‡ mountains rear’d
 ‘ Their humid walls, while Israel pass’d between,
 ‘ Clos’d on his routed host. What tho’ unknown
 ‘ And intricate the path? hast thou not heard
 ‘ Of that bright || cloud which marshal’d them by day?

* *ἔχθρος γὰρ*, &c.

Who dares think one thing, and another *tell*,

My heart detests him as the gates of hell. Pope’s Iliad. B. 9.

† Exod. xii. 36.

‡ Exod. xiv. 22.

|| Exod. xiii. 21.

- ‘ And when dark night hid all her choir of stars,
 ‘ Rose not the fiery pillar? What tho thirst,
 ‘ Tho famine press’d them sore; gush’d not a stream 230
 ‘ Of freshest beverage from the riven rock?
 ‘ And when the barren earth withheld her stores,
 ‘ Fell not sweet * bread from heaven? Did Amalek,
 ‘ Did Og, did Sihon, triumph o’er the tribes
 ‘ Of way-worn Israël? To all the males,
 ‘ Save two, which Moses number’d by the foot
 ‘ Of Sinai, sacred mount, I grant, the fields
 ‘ Of promise were denied: But say, whence sprung
 ‘ The fatal prohibition? thro their camp
 ‘ Spread not the sound of murmur, and distrust? 240
 ‘ Forsook they not their living strength, seduc’d
 ‘ By gross idolatries? Hence, as a cloud
 ‘ Eclipses the bright sun, what time his orb

* Exod. xvi. 12.

' Flames in the chambers of the southern sky,
 ' His countenance grew dark ; the sons of Dan
 ' Were stricken, Simeon wept, and Ashur shook
 ' Thro all his tents. But when to him they mourn'd,
 ' Ne'er did they mourn in vain. Crimes, rank as theirs,
 ' Have fix'd us here awhile, till exile purge
 ' Our sins away. That hour is come ; and now 250
 ' Why stand we loitering thus in dull debate ?
 ' Hath not his prophet said ? shall we distrust
 ' His power ? or kindle his fierce wrath again
 ' By murmurs, by sedition ? Shall we leave
 ' The holy one of Israel, and fall down
 ' To Belus, or to Mithras ? Go, enquire
 ' Of Cusshan, or of * Kedar ; ask the isles,
 ' Will ye forsake your Gods ? Tell, mighty king,

* Jeremiah ii. 10.

‘ God of our fathers, tell, why thou alone
 ‘ Hast seen thy shrine forsaken, while a cloud 260
 ‘ Of never-ceasing incense wafts perfume
 ‘ To Moloch, and to Dagon? Never more,
 ‘ Ah! never may thy chosen servants rouse
 ‘ Thy slumbering vengeance! For thee, Othniel, go,
 ‘ Go, false dissembler; spread thro all the tribes
 ‘ Affliction, and dismay; bid them remain
 ‘ In Babylon; record, as thou art wont,
 ‘ The dangers of the way; but should they hear
 ‘ Thy voice, should even this venerable ring
 ‘ Of sages, and of elders, shrink with fear, 270
 ‘ Unguarded, and alone, myself will go.’
 ‘ No, not alone,’ said Misaël; ‘take at least
 ‘ An old man with thee: zeal will speed my steps,
 ‘ Tho time hath drawn his furrows o’er my brow.

‘ My

' My wife, my children gone, behold I stand
 ' Like an old oak, whose branches all are scath'd
 ' By heaven's red lightening, but whose knotty trunk,
 ' By tortuous roots bound to the solid earth,
 ' Remains immoveable. Tho bow'd by age,
 ' Tho lost to every other human joy, 280
 ' Sion is dear as ever to my soul.
 ' O Othniel, hadst thou heard the fatal crash,
 ' When God's own house fell from its rocky base;
 ' O hadst thou seen the tears, and mark'd the sighs
 ' Of the first captives, driven from all they lov'd,
 ' Thou wouldst not brook delay; nor even the warmth
 ' Of young Zorobabel would equal thine.
 ' For me, could I but once again behold
 ' Thy brook, O Cedron; could I see the stones,
 ' Tho now perchance with moss o'ergrown; or trace 290
 ' The

' The remnant of one cedar beam, that join'd
 ' Its firm support to prop that holy pile,
 ' Among the ruins would I rest mine head,
 ' And sleep in peace. Who knows but yet again,
 ' As in the days of Solomon, the tribes
 ' May all unite, and rescued Judah throw
 ' His fond fraternal arms round Israel's neck,
 ' And welcome him to Salem ? Then, oh then,
 ' From Ascalon to Gilead, from the mount
 ' Of northern Lebanon to the Asphaltic lake, 300
 ' The land shall all be ours : our herds shall range
 ' On Bafan, and on Carmel ; Ephraim's brow
 ' Shall whiten with the fleece of new-wash'd sheep ;
 ' The daughter of Jerusalem shall drink
 ' From Jacob's fountain, and Samaria's nymph
 ' Recline on Rachel's tomb. Soft is the dew,

' Which

' Which evening * sheds on Hermon ; sweet the oil
 ' Which drip'd down Aaron's sacerdotal vest,
 ' Even to his skirts ; but sweeter far, my friends,
 ' To live in unity, and mutual love. 319
 ' Twas thus your fathers cheer'd the gloomy hours
 ' Of exile ; all was peace. One heart was theirs ;
 ' One interest, to restore the captive tribes ;
 ' One wish, to see Jerusalem again.'
 ' Just,' said Zorobabel, ' O reverend seer,
 ' Just are thy words. But this man prostitutes
 ' The name of public-love, and by fair speech
 ' Conceals his base designs. O how I hate,
 ' When low-born cunning sits in wisdom's seat,
 ' To see the gazing multitude admire, 320
 ' As wisdom's self were there ! Coward, and slave,

* Psalm cxxiii.

' Hence to thy Dalilah; hang on her breast,
 ' Play with the filken ringlets of her hair,
 ' And as she trolls her wanton madrigal,
 ' Swear that no virgin of Jerufalem
 ' Is half fo lovely; swear thou ne'er wilt leave
 ' Her Babylon, to seek, thou know'ft not what,
 ' The country of thy fathers. But beware;
 ' For if, as thou wert wont in other days,
 ' Thou fow'ft fedition 'mid the wavering tribes, 339
 ' Judah has yet a fpirit to refent,
 ' An arm to punifh.'

' Go, vain railer, go,'

Said Othniel, in a tone where fear was mix'd
 With hatred, and difdain, ' go round by night *
 ' And rouse the drooping tribes; return'd perchance

* See Book I. v. 256.

' They'll

' They'll hail thee as their king, and at thy throne
 ' Renew their ancient fealty. Too much,
 ' Too much already hath Jerufalem
 ' Bewail'd her royal line. It was the fin 340
 ' Of that accursed race which cried to heaven,
 ' And drew down vengeance on their people's head.
 ' That race by long captivity is funk
 ' Even to plebeian baseness. Shall we then
 ' At once forget the source of all our woes,
 ' And place Judæa's sceptre in the hand
 ' Of Jechoniah's heir? Let the tame fools,
 ' Gull'd by these specious arts, embrace thy chain;
 ' For me, rather than cringe, and bend my knee
 ' Obsequious, to a vile usurper's throne, 350
 ' In Babylon I'll live, and never waste
 ' One single thought on Salem, or on thee.'

Thus while he spake, rage redden'd on the cheek
 Of young Zorobabel. He started up,
 Impatient to reply ; but Daniel rose,
 And fix'd attention held the council mute.
 By reason, by persuasive truth he strove
 To bend the stubborn heart of Othniel.
 So to their fold, when evening streaks with red
 The cloudless landscape, while the shepherd drives 360
 His flock, if chance but one refuse to hear
 The well-known call, he leaves the obedient sheep,
 And o'er the plain with many a weary step
 Pursues the devious wanderer. But when truth,
 Nor reason can prevail, 'Shalt thou, vain boy,'
 Exclaims the man of God, 'shalt thou retard
 ' Our blest deliverance ? Shall the general weal
 ' Yield to a private voice ? Let Othniel stay ;

' For

‘ For us, this instant let us all repair
 ‘ To Cyrus ; for while we sit loitering here, 370
 ‘ Jerusalem lies prostrate in the dust.’

The prophet ended, and at once arose
 The obsequious Sanhedrim. Toward that rich house,
 Where late Belfhazzar held his midnight rout,
 Where now the Persian sits in regal state,
 They bend their way. But Othniel turn’d his steps
 Diverse. The fair Assyrian saw him come
 With folded arms, and downcast eye : she saw,
 And trembled ; for she knew that Judah’s chiefs
 Were met ; and worse than death she fear’d, lest fate 380
 Should doom her to lament in solitude
 The loss of whom she lov’d. ‘ What means,’ she cried,
 ‘ My Othniel ? speak.’ He spake not. Silence seem’d
 More horrible to her distracted soul,

Than words of bitterest wrath. She could not weep,
 But look'd such anguish, that a sudden tear
 Gush'd from her Othniel's eye. She, deeply vers'd
 In female art, and all the wiles of love,
 Watch'd the soft moment, on his yielding arm
 Hung amorous, and with many a sigh began.

‘ Canst thou then leave me, Othniel? canst thou go,
 ‘ Ne’er to return again? For thee my fame,
 ‘ For thee my kindred, and for thee my gods
 ‘ I left, and to the keen reproach of scorn
 ‘ Yielded my virgin honour. Not a dame
 ‘ Thro all Chaldæa, but with cruel jests
 ‘ Will load my misery: “this is she,” will cry
 ‘ Each envious rival, “this is she, who lov’d
 “ The stranger, who disgrac’d her father’s house,
 “ Her country, and her gods.” O may I sink

' In everlasting rest, or e'er I hear
 ' The voice of slander murmuring o'er my name !
 ' Think on the dangers of the way, which leads
 ' Thro savage hordes, inhospitable soil,
 ' From Babylon to Sion : think on these,
 ' And if, aham'd to fear, thou still wilt go,
 ' O take me with thee ! on my faithful breast
 ' Repose thy wearied head : the dews of night
 ' From thy warm limbs I'll chase ; and when the sun
 ' With fire solstitial cleaves the gasping earth, 410
 ' Fan thee with freshest gales : for thy repast
 ' I'll cull the daintiest herbs ; to slake thy thirst
 ' I'll bring fresh water from the coolest spring.
 ' Yet wherefore go ? thou wilt not here remain
 ' A single sojourner : such is the force
 ' Of thy persuasive eloquence, the tribes

H 4

' Will

' Will rather stay in Babylon with thee
 ' Than march they knew not whither. Go; collect
 ' Thy followers: rouse their fears; alarm their souls
 ' With tales of sad disaster; paint such scenes 420
 ' As fable never feign'd.—But O forgive,
 ' Forgive the violence of a woman's love,
 ' For never will I live beyond the day
 ' Which tears my Othniel from me. 'Tis at least
 ' The privilege of misery, to die:
 ' And while or sword, or fire, has power to kill,
 ' That privilege, O Othniel, shall be mine.'

She spake, and wept. He gently from her eye
 Kiss'd the soft tear, and with impetuous speed
 Departed. Forthwith to each Jewish slave 430
 Whom fear, or love, or interest, urg'd to stay,
 He hasten'd, and with specious argument

Beneath

Beneath his banner lifted half the tribes :
 The women chief ; they, like the reed, which veers
 To every wind that blows, fickle of mind,
 And impotent of purpose, yield assent
 To every new deceiver. In the street
 Before the gate with threatening eye they stand,
 And look as tho' their deep resolves were all
 Unchangeable ; while Daniel, and his train 340
 Salute their conqueror on his golden throne,
 That throne, where conscious of superior worth
 Cyrus exalted sits. Around him stand
 His valiant spearmen tall, and strong, in war
 His guard, his ornament in peace. With them
 Are join'd those gallant souls, whom love of fame
 Drew from their native fields, Carmanian chiefs,
 And Arachosian, Ctesias, and the son

Of

Of old Orontes, and that dreaded name
 Tigranes. Near the throne on either side 450
 Stands Gadatas, and Gobryas; while the lords
 Of Babylon fall prostrate on the ground,
 Their names, their rank, their virtues they record,
 Their ancient feats in arms. To their new prince
 They vow perpetual fealty, and swear
 To add their annual tribute to his stores.

Scarce was this homage ended, when appear'd,
 Attended by his faithful counsellors,
 The reverend form of Daniel. Cyrus saw,
 And started; thrice his colour chang'd to pale, 460
 And thrice to deepest red. As one, whom chance
 Leads thro the church-way path, where many a stone
 Marks out the separate mansions of the dead,
 Or sees, or thinks he sees, some shrouded ghost,

Spirit of friend departed, thwart the night,
 And trembles with a sacred awe, as tho
 A messenger had hail'd him from that land,
 Which lies beyond the grave: such heaven-struck awe
 Felt Cyrus, and to Gobryas thus began.

‘ Gobryas, behold that venerable sage; 470
 ‘ Whence, and what is he? Is he clad indeed
 ‘ In flesh, and bones, as we; or is he but
 ‘ Some airy form, that cheats the uncertain eye,
 ‘ A shape, and not a substance? Tell me true;
 ‘ For such a man, so mild, so hoary-hair’d,
 ‘ Like him in dress, and features, when soft sleep
 ‘ Had steep’d my senses in oblivion, flood
 ‘ Beside my pillow. To a lofty hill
 ‘ Where lay the ruins of an ancient shrine,
 ‘ He pointed, and with voice prophetic, such 480
 ‘ As

‘ As wak’d me not, but pierc’d my slumbering ear,
 ‘ Foretold strange things to come. Tell, if thou know’st,
 ‘ His age, his rank, his office, and his name.’

He ended, and thus Gobryas. ‘ Oft, great king,
 ‘ Oft hast thou heard me speak of Judah’s tribes,
 ‘ That wondrous race, whom from the palmy vales
 ‘ Of Palæstine to Babylon’s plain
 ‘ Nebassar bore triumphant. Never yet,

‘ Tho much invited, have they quaff’d the bowl *,
 ‘ Or shared the banquet with Assyria’s sons ; 490
 ‘ Save here and there some amorous youth, enslav’d
 ‘ By fair Chaldæan. Him, his brethren stile
 ‘ Degenerate, and accurs’d ; for, tho a race
 ‘ Of slaves, they scorn their conquerors. Nor to Bel,
 ‘ Nor Nebo will they bend their stubborn knee ;

* Daniel i. 8.

' In secret they adore some local God,
 ' Mighty to save. That ancient, whom thou see'st,
 ' Favour'd above the rest, hath oft reveal'd
 ' The will of heaven. Twice *, when Nebassar's soul,
 ' Perplex'd with nightly visions, sought in vain 500
 ' To all the sage magicians of his court,
 ' He read the book of fate, and told him things,
 ' Which time shall yet reveal. Hence in his gate
 ' High-honour'd did he sit, provincial chief †
 ' Of spacious Babylon. Perchance he comes
 ' To hail the monarch of the vanquish'd tribes.
 ' Say, wilt thou hear him speak? Sweet is his voice,
 ' And powerful are his words: no fear will mark
 ' A dastard soul: he speaks as man to man;
 ' And yet with decent reverence, such as fits 510

* Dan. ii. 1, &c.—iv. 5, &c.

† Dan. ii. 48.

' A sub-

‘ A subject to his sovran.’ Cyrus nods
Assent, and Daniel, bending low, begins.

‘ My name is Daniel ; in Chaldæa’s land
‘ Call’d * Belteshazzar. Hither, as that chief
‘ Reports, whom well I knew ere cruel pride
‘ Had driven him for revenge to foreign tents,
‘ In early youth I came. Tho grac’d with power,
‘ Tho honour’d with Nebassar’s noblest gifts,
‘ Yet bondage still was bitter. Not a day
‘ Has pass’d, but I have turn’d a longing eye
‘ Towards lost Jerusalem. Tis hence I lead
‘ My faithful friends to hail their mighty king,
‘ And dare with humblest suit to interrupt
‘ His recent victories. On thee, great, prince,
‘ Depends their anxious hope. Back to that land,

520

* Dan. i. 7.

‘ Where

' Where once their fathers held imperial sway,
 ' Fain would the tribes return. Speak but the word,
 ' And every voice shall rend the vault of heaven,
 ' Hymning thy praise. Posterity shall read
 ' The imperial edict, and record thy name, 530
 ' While sun, or moon endures. Nor deem our God,
 ' As Gobryas thinks, a deity confin'd
 ' By time, or circumscrib'd by local space :
 ' The earth, the heaven, is his: in every clime,
 ' Thro every age, his power, his truth remains,
 ' Unalter'd, unimpair'd. Think'ft thou that dream
 ' Was casual, when thou saw'ft a form like mine
 ' Undraw thy curtains in the hour of sleep ?
 ' No; twas the God, whom Benjamin adores,
 ' It was the God, who, tho thou know'ft it not, 540
 ' Guides all thy steps, that spread before thine eyes

- ' The * vision, emblem of poor Judah's state
- ' Imploring aid from thee. Behold this book † ;
- ' Two centuries have pass'd, since here thy name
- ' Was written. Thee, while yet unborn, the seer
- ' Observ'd, and with prophetic rapture stil'd
- ' Cyrus, the Lord's anointed. Look again ;
- ' See where thy gallant acts predicted stand,
- ' Thy name, thy pity to the captive tribes,
- ' O Sion's blest deliverer ! mark it well ;
- ' Stamp'd was this volume with the seal of God.'

550

Thus while he spake, all wrapt the conqueror sat
 In wonder, and in reverence. Then, as one
 Recovering from a trance, where every sense
 Seem'd lost, ' O tell me, Daniel, tell, ' he cries,
 ' The story of thy fathers ; tell me who,

* See Book i. v. 150.

† The prophecies of Isaiah.

' And

And whence ye are ; your race, your name, your God,

O tell me all, even to the fatal time

When Babylon receiv'd you, where, they say,

The seventieth sun is rolling o'er your heads.

560

Mark every circumstance ; still much of day

Remains ; and I could steal from balmy sleep

The midnight hour, to hear a tale like thine.'

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

